

Attention Must Be Paid
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November 26, 2018

Concept: Plants and animals – and individuals – depend on other living things and non-living things in the environment to meet some of their needs, and if those needs aren't met, there are consequences.

Problem Solved: Elinor figures out that friends need attention, in the same way plants and other living things need attention.

General idea: I don't have this totally worked out yet, because I don't know if there's a specific character that might work best in this story. The story is about cause and effect, and the idea is that Elinor (and Ari and Hazel?) maybe overlook another member of the class when they're playing, or notice that the classmate is cranky, or sad, or disagreeable in some way. They notice it but don't know how to help him or her overcome it. So they do what kids might normally do: They continue with their play. But then it starts to bug Elinor and she wants to try to get to the bottom of this classmate's behaviour.

Then, she notices that the classroom plant wilts and looks very sad when it doesn't get watered. And she realizes that as soon as it gets that nourishment, it perks up and looks healthy again. I'm thinking there would be other examples in nature that she could put together and realize that if she and Ari and Hazel pay more attention to what their classmate needs or wants, maybe (s)he will enjoy doing things with them more.

I think it could be a lovely story – I really like the idea of cause and effect in nature being modelled in our interactions.